

TESTIMONY OF AMBASSADOR PETER TOMSEN
BEFORE THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER
JULY 27, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN:

MY COLLEAGUES AND I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, U.S. BILATERAL AND UN MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, AND U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO DISCUSS MY RECENT THREE-WEEK VISIT TO PAKISTAN, DURING WHICH, AS U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE, I MET HUNDREDS OF AFGHANS, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. MANY TRAVELED TO THE THREE PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN BORDER POINTS I VISITED TO PROVIDE THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS TO ME FIRSTHAND.

MY CONVERSATIONS WITH AFGHANS IN THE PAST THREE WEEKS AT TIMES REFLECTED THEIR TRADITIONAL DIFFERENCES ALONG TRIBAL, REGIONAL, ETHNIC AND OTHER LINES. SUCH DIVISIONS IN AFGHAN SOCIETY ARE FAMILIAR TO MANY AMERICANS WHO HAVE READ POPULAR NOVELS, HISTORY AND LITERATURE ABOUT AFGHANISTAN. YET, THERE WAS ONE COMMON OBJECTIVE SHARED BY ALL AFGHANS WHOM I MET: THEIR BITTER OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET-IMPOSED REGIME IN KABUL, LED BY NAJIB AND THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN, THE PDPA.

SINCE THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE FORCED THE SOVIETS TO WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES, MOSCOW HAS BEEN PUMPING UNPRECEDENTED AMOUNTS OF MILITARY HARDWARE INTO AFGHANISTAN TO KEEP NAJIB AND HIS REGIME IN POWER. THE SOVIETS HAVE CREATED A VIRTUAL AIRBRIDGE TO KABUL. THEY HAVE TRANSFERRED OVER 600 APCs AND TANKS, HUNDREDS OF SCUD SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILES, EACH WITH 2000 POUND WARHEADS, AND THOUSANDS OF TONS OF ARTILLERY, AIRCRAFT ORDNANCE, PLUS OTHER WEAPONS AND MUNITIONS. THESE SUPPLIES DWARF THE ASSISTANCE GOING TO THE RESISTANCE.

THE PDPA REGIME HAS ABANDONED THE MOUNTAINS AND MOST OF AFGHANISTAN'S VALLEYS, BASICALLY FORTIFYING THEMSELVES IN MAJOR TOWNS AND CITIES. WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE SOVIET FORCES, THE RESISTANCE HAS HAD TO ADJUST TO A MORE CONVENTIONAL KIND OF WARFARE.

AFTER THE INITIAL WEEKS, THE RESISTANCE HAS AVOIDED FRONTAL ASSAULTS ON FORTIFIED POSITIONS. INSTEAD, IT IS SURROUNDING THEM, ATTEMPTING TO CUT OFF CONNECTING ROADS AND AIRFIELDS, AND TO NEGOTIATE THE SURRENDER OF GARRISONS. SINCE FEBRUARY, THE RESISTANCE HAS MADE SLOW, INCREMENTAL PROGRESS IN THIS STRATEGY, BUT TO DATE HAS SCORED NO SINGLE DRAMATIC SUCCESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, TIME IS ON THE RESISTANCE'S SIDE. IT WILL PREVAIL. THE AFGHAN PEOPLE REJECT NAJIB AND THE PDPA AS A REGIME IMPOSED BY AFGHANISTAN'S POWERFUL NORTHERN NEIGHBOR. THE PDPA REGIME WILL EVENTUALLY MEET THE SAME FATE AS MANY OTHER AFGHANS PLACED IN POWER BY OUTSIDERS OVER THE CENTURIES.

THE WAR HAS SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED THE AFGHAN ECONOMY. RECENT UN ANALYSIS SUGGESTS THAT PRODUCTION OF WHEAT, AFGHANISTAN'S MOST IMPORTANT CROP, MAY BE LESS THAN HALF OF PRE-WAR LEVELS. IRRIGATION SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED, MINES HAVE MADE AGRICULTURAL LAND UNUSABLE, VILLAGES UNSAFE, AND TRANSPORT DIFFICULT. LIVESTOCK HAS BEEN DECIMATED, AND SUPPLIES OF SEED AND FERTILIZER SERIOUSLY REDUCED. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS HAVE FALLEN 40 PERCENT SINCE 1977, AND MOST OF THE TRADITIONAL TRADE TIES THROUGH PAKISTAN BROKEN OR IMPAIRED. IN THE RURAL AREAS, SOCIAL SERVICES WERE HISTORICALLY MINIMAL, BUT HAVE NOW BEEN VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED EXCEPT WHERE SUPPORTED BY INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS.

SINCE 1985 THE U.S., THROUGH A.I.D., HAS BEEN PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN. IN THE FALL OF 1988, THE A.I.D. STRATEGY WAS REVISED FROM PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO ALL LIBERATED AREAS OF AFGHANISTAN. IT NOW EMPHASIZES AREAS TO WHICH THE MAJORITY OF THE REFUGEES ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN.

WE EXPECT THE UN AND THE WORLD BANK TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN. A TASK THAT REQUIRES GREATER RESOURCES THAN DONORS CAN SUPPLY BILATERALLY. THE OBJECTIVES OF A.I.D.'S PROGRAM THROUGH 1991 ARE TO MEET THE PRESSING NEEDS OF REPATRIATION AND REHABILITATION. THE PRIORITY IS ENSURING FOOD SECURITY AND RESTORING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, WE WILL SUPPORT PROJECTS TO CLEAR MINES, IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION CAPACITY, SUPPLY FERTILIZER AND SEED, AND PROVIDE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES. A KEY ELEMENT OF OUR STRATEGY IS AND WILL REMAIN TO REDUCE NARCOTICS PRODUCTION.

AS WE WORK TOWARD REPATRIATION, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST STILL PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE REFUGEES IN PLACE. A TOTAL OF 3.2 MILLION AFGHAN REFUGEES LIVE IN APPROXIMATELY 230 CAMPS IN PAKISTAN. CONTRARY TO WHAT WE HAD ALL HOPED, THEY HAVE NOT YET GONE HOME. INDEED, AN ADDITIONAL 70,000 REFUGEES HAVE FLED TO PAKISTAN IN RECENT MONTHS, PRIMARILY TO ESCAPE FIGHTING AROUND JALALABAD. IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, THE U.S. IS CONTRIBUTING \$20.5 MILLION FOR CARE AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS, \$5 MILLION FOR ICRC'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROGRAM AND \$2.5 MILLION FOR THE UN TRUST FUND. WE HAVE ALSO DONATED \$35 MILLION IN FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANS TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM.

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB OF MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE ON BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE EVENTUAL REPATRIATION OF THE REFUGEES. THE UN COORDINATOR FOR AFGHANISTAN MOBILIZED CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEARLY \$900 MILLION FROM 30 DONOR COUNTRIES IN FY-89. ALTHOUGH THIS FIGURE IS EXAGGERATED BY VALUING THE \$600 MILLION IN-KIND SOVIET PLEDGE AT THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE. WE ARE WORKING WITH THE UN SYSTEM ON THE GROUND IN PAKISTAN TO HELP THE UN GET READY TO USE THESE RESOURCES FOR REPATRIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION.

REGARDING THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES, I REGRET TO INFORM THAT MY PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS WITH REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN PRODUCED THE UNIFORM ANSWER: THE GREAT BULK WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN KABUL IS GONE. TO DATE, ONLY A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE HAVE RETURNED; OTHERS HAVE ARRIVED FROM AREAS OF CONTINUING CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN TO REPLACE THEM. MY OWN JUDGMENT IS THAT THE GREAT BULK OF THE REFUGEES WILL RETURN ONLY WHEN THE PDPA RELINQUISHES POWER, THROUGH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OR OTHERWISE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, YOU HAVE ASKED THAT I DESCRIBE U.S. POLICY. THE UNITED STATES HAS PURSUED FOUR CONSISTENT GOALS ON AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE SOVIETS COMMENCED THEIR BRUTAL OCCUPATION IN DECEMBER 1979:

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET FORCES,
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE AFGHAN PEOPLE,
RETURN OF THE REFUGEES IN SAFETY AND HONOR,
RESTORATION OF AFGHANISTAN'S SOVEREIGNTY AND
INDEPENDENCE.

THE FIRST GOAL -- SOVIET WITHDRAWAL -- HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES WON THE VICTORY. PAKISTANI AND U.S. SUPPORT WAS VITAL. THE THREE OTHER GOALS REMAIN TO BE ACHIEVED. DURING THE JUNE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO TO THE UNITED STATES, PRESIDENT BUSH DECLARED:

"THE MUJAHIDEEN . . . STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION GOES ON -- A GOAL THAT BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND PAKISTAN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND I DISCUSSED WAYS TO ENCOURAGE A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN THAT WILL LEAD TO A NON-ALIGNED REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, WILLING TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, TO REPLACE THE ILLEGITIMATE REGIME IN KABUL. THE UNITED STATES AND PAKISTAN WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ANY SERIOUS AVENUE TOWARDS THIS END."

THE UNITED STATES, PAKISTAN, AND THE RESISTANCE STAND FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAT WILL TRANSFER POWER AWAY FROM THE PDPA TO AN AFGHAN ENTITY TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. THE SETTLEMENT SHOULD SATISFY THE OBJECTIVES OF SELF-DETERMINATION, RETURN OF THE REFUGEES AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT AFGHAN NATION -- NOT ONE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF AN OUTSIDE POWER, BUT ONE THAT HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL OF ITS NEIGHBORS. THE RESISTANCE NEEDS OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN A POSITION OF STRENGTH AS IT PURSUES A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT INCORPORATING THESE OBJECTIVES.

AIG. THE UNITED STATES WELCOMED THE CREATION OF THE AFGHAN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN LATE FEBRUARY AS AN IMPORTANT STEP. WE ENCOURAGE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AIG TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BROADEN ITS BASE OF SUPPORT TO INCLUDE ALL MAJOR ELEMENTS OF AFGHAN SOCIETY, SUCH AS SHIAS, COMMANDERS AND SHURAS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN AND PROMINENT AFGHANS ABROAD. WE URGE ITS DEVELOPMENT AS A REPRESENTATIVE BODY, A VALID ALTERNATIVE AND REPLACEMENT FOR THE ILLEGITIMATE KABUL REGIME IMPOSED AND PROTECTED BY AN OUTSIDE POWER. MY RECENT TALKS WITH AIG LEADERS AND MANY OTHER AFGHANS REVEALED THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING PROBLEMS, THE AIG HAS STAFFED MANY OF ITS MINISTRIES WHOSE SERVICES ARE RELEVANT TO ITS STRUGGLE. IT IS BEGINNING TO FORGE ADDITIONAL LINKS WITH SHURAS AND COMMANDERS, AND TO IMPLEMENT NEW ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN.

PAKISTAN. PAKISTAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RESISTANCE, BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY, WAS FORGED EARLY IN THE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE. THE AFGHANS ARE CLEARLY GRATEFUL FOR PAKISTAN'S SUSTAINED HELP. DURING HER TALKS IN WASHINGTON, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO STATED:

"PAKISTAN REMAINS COMMITTED TO A POLITICAL SOLUTION OF THE AFGHAN PROBLEM, WHEREBY THE BRAVE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREELY CHOOSE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE. PAKISTAN'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND DEMOCRACY ARE FUNDAMENTAL."

THE SOVIET UNION. IN 1986, PRESIDENT GORBACHEV TERMED AFGHANISTAN "A BLEEDING WOUND." THE WOUND WAS INFLICTED BY MOSCOW. SOVIET BLOOD IS NO LONGER FLOWING. AFGHAN BLOOD CONTINUES TO FLOW FROM THE WOUND. MOSCOW IS IN A POSITION TO APPLY THE TOURNIQUET. WE URGE THE SOVIET UNION TO COOPERATE ACTIVELY IN ACHIEVING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAT RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

UN. THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES MUST WORK OUT THE FUTURE POLITICAL COURSE OF THEIR COUNTRY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS EITHER APPROPRIATE OR POSSIBLE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS TO TRY TO FORCE A SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME. THE CURRENT ROLE OF A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ACCOMPANYING UNGOMAP OBSERVERS IS APPROPRIATE FOR NOW; HE IS IN THE AREA, ACTIVELY SOUNDING OUT PARTIES, PROBING FOR OPENINGS, AND AVAILABLE TO WORK WITH THE PARTIES WHEN OR IF AN OPPORTUNITY ARISES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, HERE IN WASHINGTON, WE HAVE JUST CONCLUDED PRODUCTIVE TALKS WITH PAKISTAN ON AFGHANISTAN AT THE EXPERTS LEVEL. WE WILL BE CONDUCTING FURTHER EXCHANGES WITH THE SOVIETS ON AFGHANISTAN IN THE COMING WEEKS. WE HOPE OUR SOVIET COLLEAGUES WILL ADOPT A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH THAN HERETOFORE IN COOPERATING TO PRODUCE A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAT PERMITS SELF-DETERMINATION IN AFGHANISTAN, FREE OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. WE REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT THE U.S. POLICY OF WORKING TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHILE CONTINUING OUR SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IF WE HAVE THE PATIENCE AND STEADFASTNESS TO STAY THE COURSE.